

REMARKS

By the present Amendment, minor revisions have been made in the specification. The claims, however, have not been amended as applicants firmly maintain that the cited prior art does not disclose or suggest the invention as defined in the claims of record. Prior to addressing the sole rejection set forth in the Action, applicants believe that a discussion of certain aspects of the invention is in order. In particular, as set forth in claim 1, one aspect of the present invention relates to a composition comprising a lactic acid-based resin (component (A)) and ethylene-unsaturated carboxylic acid copolymer (component (B)) and/or an ethylene-unsaturated carboxylic acid ionomer (component (C)). Independent claim 6 relates to a method for producing paper laminates using components (A) and (B) and/or (C). Therefore, those of ordinary skill in the art will understand that the composition of claim 1 recites the presence of components (A) and (B) and that component (C) can optionally be present.

To obtain a further understanding of the presently claimed invention and a proper appreciation of the difference between the prior art, the Examiner's attention is respectfully directed to the Examples starting on page 22 of the specification. As is evident therefrom, when one follows the teachings of the present invention, one can obtain good production effects and product properties. However, when Component (B) is omitted, as in Comparative Examples 1-3 on page 28, and Comparative Examples 4 and 5 on page 30, inferior results are obtained. In this latter respect, the Examiner's attention is further directed to the results set forth in Table 1 on page 34 of the specification which illustrates some of the distinctions between Examples 4 and 5 and Comparative Examples 4 and 5.

Turning to the single rejection set forth in the Official Action, the Examiner has taken the position that Japanese Published Patent Application No. 08-333550A anticipates all of the claims under 35 U.S.C. §102(b). The '550 publication discloses an adhesive sheet comprising a surface substrate layer and an adhesive layer. The surface substrate layer comprises a film which is composed of a lactic acid-based polymer and the adhesive layer comprises a copolymer composed of defined amounts (a) to (e) monomers wherein monomer (a) is a carboxylic acid-modified rosin ester; monomer (b) is a (poly)ethylene (meth)acrylate; monomer (c) is a C₄ to C₁₈ alkyl ester of (meth)acrylic acid; monomer (d) is an ethylenic unsaturated carboxylic acid-containing monomer; and monomer (e) is a monomer copolymerizable with monomers (a) to (d).¹ Accordingly, the Examiner's assertion in the Action that the '550 publication describes a binder comprising a lactic acid polymer and an ethylene-acrylic acid copolymer is incorrect. The lactic acid-based polymer constitutes the substrate layer and the distinct adhesive layer comprises the copolymer of monomers (a) to (e). Stated simply, there is no description of a composition containing at least components (A) and (B) as recited in the claims of record.

Further demonstrating the patentability of the present invention are the aforementioned results provided in the specification. As explained above, the advantageous results that can flow from the present invention are not obtained by the Comparative Examples which use a lactic acid-based resin alone. Therefore, the **Comparative Examples** of the present application are comparable to the substrate layer of the '550 publication which uses a lactic acid polymer without the defined

¹ See the attached abstract of the '550 publication obtained from the esp@cenet database.

Component (B) of the present invention. Accordingly, such evidence further supports the patentability of the presently claimed invention.

For all of the reasons set forth above, applicants respectfully submit that the claims of record are patentable over the cited prior art and therefore request reconsideration and allowance of the present application.

Should the Examiner wish to discuss any aspect of the present application, she is invited to contact the undersigned attorney at the number provided below.

Respectfully submitted,

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